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# SCIENCE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1911

THE RELATION OF THE LABORATORY TO  
MEDICINE<sup>1</sup>

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IN addressing so representative a body as this association I can not but feel that I am engaged almost in a work of supererogation when I presume to speak upon a topic so familiar to you all. Despite this feeling on my part, I am led to believe that upon occasion an oft-told tale, if palatably redressed, may prove appetizing enough: I will venture an experiment.

A careful perusal of the pages of the history of medicine plainly demonstrates the long and tortuous path pursued from the ages of earliest record down to relatively recent times. We can see how at one time the noble art was held in the clutches of superstition, its acts governed by a deep-rooted primal belief in demonology; at another time religious doctrines dominated and intimidated progress; and at other periods metaphysical discussions held back advance and even wrecked discoveries. The history of this struggle onwards towards the light of knowledge, marked as it has been by errors and lapses, is fascinatingly punctuated by epoch-making contributions here and there along the line by an occasional genius or hard-headed thinker. It is not to be doubted, however, that had it not been for the wonderful development of the sciences, the modern status of medicine would have been held back for an indefinite period. Our debt to the pioneers in chemistry, physics and biology, and to their successors down to the present moment, is enormous, and we must

MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to the Editor of SCIENCE, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

<sup>1</sup>Read at the thirtieth annual meeting of the Ontario Medical Association, Niagara Falls, Ontario, May 30 to June 1, 1911.